

Supply—Public Works

proposed pier for the west end of the harbour as compared with the alternative suggestion that the government should acquire certain piers which now exist at the east end of the harbour, bring them up to date and use them there. As I say, I do not propose to spend any time expressing my opinion on that question because I do not think my opinion would impress anyone. I do not think it would be of any value. I am not an expert, and I do not pretend to be an expert.

But because I think the matter is extremely important to the future of Newfoundland, in fact to the whole of Canada, what I do say to the minister most earnestly is this. Surely the minister could go ahead with the parts of the plan about which there is no controversy and have, as quickly as possible, a really expert investigation in which the proper people from the government would be called; in which Mr. Eric Bowring, who I understand acted as agent for the minister of war transport of the United Kingdom during the war and who had the responsibility of operating the harbour, would be called; in which any other person having any pretensions to real knowledge would be called; in which any citizen who wished to make representations would be called. It does seem to me, sir, that there are a lot of people in St. John's who are worried about this question. They are afraid that if the government do not proceed with the Foundation Company plan they will not do anything. I do not think so ill of the minister. I think much better of him than that.

What I am trying to suggest, sir, is that there is no need to delay going ahead with some parts of the plan while carrying on at the same time a careful investigation into these two controversial points. It does seem to me that all of us, on both sides of the house, would feel better satisfied if that could be done. I do not think there is anything more I can usefully say. I have attempted in what I have said to be entirely non-partisan because, as the hon. member for St. John's East rightly pointed out, it was the previous government that engaged the Foundation Company to make this plan. I am not competent to criticize, and I am sure the hon. gentleman does not think he is competent to criticize, either. However, some people with reputations, who feel they are competent to criticize, have criticized the plan. It does seem to me that it would be better for all concerned to clear this up.

If I may say something that perhaps reflects a little bit on the previous government, we have a situation in Port aux Basques that all of us on this side of the house rather deplore. I do not think those things that have been done at Port aux Basques would have been

done by even the present Minister of Transport if he had occupied that position then. What I am appealing to the Minister of Public Works to do is to make sure he does not do some things which will turn out to be as regrettable as some things done at Port aux Basques. Again, I am not trying to cast reflections on anyone. I am trying to indicate what I think should be done about this problem that is of grave concern to people of substance, people of responsibility, in St. John's.

I must say, sir, that I was pleased to hear that the minister is going to have what he called a proper shelf. He said something about that at page 907 of *Hansard*. Later on in the consideration of his estimates, when he begins dealing with the province of Newfoundland, I shall have a lot of suggestions to make to him as to some things that could be put on that shelf. I hope they will be kept right at the front of the shelf, and not pushed to the back.

The Chairman: Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Mr. Green: During the discussion a week ago there were several very interesting and important questions raised by different members who participated in the debate. I have been going over them carefully in the intervening period, and I think they can best be dealt with as we come to the individual items.

In so far as the remarks just made by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate are concerned, some of these also come in this category. They could only be properly dealt with on the particular items. But he did make one statement which I should like to correct at once. He intimated that last summer the new government, on taking office, had stopped public works as a deliberate policy.

I can assure him and other members of the committee that is not the case at all. He is completely wrong in these suspicions. Our attempt to provide employment is genuine. We have not only accelerated work projects but brought in new projects. The Wesleyville post office is a very important example. There may have been plans in the department under the former government, but I assure the hon. member that there was not the slightest intention of undertaking that construction. No funds had been provided for it in the fiscal year 1957-58.

Mr. Pickersgill: Perhaps the minister will permit me, since he has called my veracity into question, to state that I happen to know there were such plans. I say, on my responsibility as a member of the former administration, that I was assured by the previous